

NORUG

NEW ORLEANS ATARI USERS' GROUP

The NORUG News "Official Newsletter of the New Orleans Atari Users' Group" Vol. 4 #9 Oct. 1987

Atari Purchases Retail Electronics Store Chain

Compiled By Todd Pettit

N.O.A.U.G. - Atari Corp. has made an agreement to buy Federated Group Inc., a consumer electronics chain, to broaden the distribution of its home computer line, says **Computer Systems News**. Over sixty-seven million dollars will be spent to buy 10.8 million outstanding shares of the California based firm.

Industry analysts believe the purchase may be the first of several acquisitions designed to expand Atari's role in the home and small business markets. Federated, primarily a west coast enterprise, lost more than \$8.3 million during the past nine months primarily due to its expansion into the Texas market. The Federated chain currently carries both Atari and Commodore computers, and that is not expected to change as the chain becomes an "arms-length subsidiary" of Atari Corp.

In other news, Atari spokesman Neil Harris relayed to **NORUG** President Dave Porter further delays in distribution of the SX212 modem and XEP80 80-column card. Their release dates are now scheduled for the end of the year. Problems with the printer interface on the XEP80 and the software for the SX212 have been blamed for the delay. Additionally, the new IBM-clone Atari PC failed its initial FCC testing. Re-design and re-submission of the computer will further delay its debut.

According to Kent Irwin in the August '87 issue of the **STATUS** newsletter, the recent shortage of 1050 drives is due to the fact that the huge inventory brought over from Warner has finally dried up. No 1050's have been produced recently to supplement the dwindling supplies in Atari's warehouses. As a result of their sudden scarcity, prices on the popular drives have risen sharply. The new drives Atari recently announced are said to be the same as the Atari PC drives, slightly reworked for compatibility with the 8-bit XE line. The cost advantages to producing this drive over the 1050 are obvious, making the introduction of the double-sided double-density drives good news both for Atari and its XE customers.

STATUS also reports that the Mega ST's being sold in Europe have new TOS ROM's (but no blitter) and that software compatibility problems similar to those Atari experienced with its 1200XL computer have arisen. No word

as to whether this situation is contributing to the delay of the Mega's introduction in the states.

A recent agreement with Mindscape and Atari Games (NOT Atari Corp. but the coin-op producer) will bring to home computers Atari hits like **Paperboy**, **Gauntlet I & II**, **Rolling Thunder**, **Road Runner**, and **Road Blasters**. Specific machines were not mentioned, but **Mindscape** promises versions to run on "most home computers".

Atari brand calculators are actually being produced by Hartech Ltd. which is licensing the Atari name and logo. Look for their full line of credit card, printing, and desktop calculators to appear on store shelves this summer. They are reportedly excellent for adding up the number of times new Atari hardware's introductions have been delayed. ■

MIO and more from ICD

By John Nagy

C.H.A.O.S. 5/87 (Reprint) - Dataperfect from LJK won't work with ICD's MIO interface box... unless you send it in for an update. For \$30 LJK will exchange you a new version of the fine database program. The sum and total of the update is that it no longer requires a translator disk to use the print option. No additional work has been done to make use of enhanced memory. The problem with the MIO is that access to the EXPANSION BUS disappears when the translator is run, cutting the MIO and its printer interface out of your system. A lot to pay for a little item, it is nonetheless available from **LJK Enterprises**, 1351 Yves, Manchester, Missouri 63011.

MIO bugs also keep it from working with **Synfile**, the only other reasonable database package for the 8-bit Atari. It, too, won't print, but for different reasons. ICD's Tom Harker assured me that this bug was fixed and would be included in a replacement ROM kit for all MIO owners. Other bugs being worked on include **BUFFER** problems (closing the pointer, or locking up), and **RS-232** emulation. Expect this update to be available soon. Tom says that they still can't keep production up with the demand for this terrific external hardisk/printer interface/modem interface/hard

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The NOAUG News Bulletin Board

The New Orleans Atari Users' Group is a not-for-profit organization and is not affiliated with the Atari Corporation, or any other commercial organization.

For more information about the NOAUG you should contact one of our club officers.

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Quarter page	\$ 5.00	our BBS when re-
Business card	\$ 3.00	quested.

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First preference for newsletter articles is as *AtariWriter Plus* files. They may be presented to the editor at club meetings. If you wish to submit by modem please call first. Printed articles are also acceptable. Articles can also be uploaded to the BBS--please leave E-mail to the editor with the article name.

Special thanks to Sandra Petit for her assistance in the preparation of this issue.



REMARKS

A Column of
Opinion by the
Editor of
The NOAUG News

A non-trivial pursuit

By Todd Petit

N.O.A.U.G. - This is my third issue of the NOAUG News, which also means that our new officers have used up one quarter of their term. Have you noticed any changes in the operation of NOAUG during this time? Well, I have.

How about some great 8-bit newsletter articles from the NOAUG membership, including one by Vince Loustalot that got the attention of Atari's Neil Harris and resulted in an offer by him to supply the club with technical information for more such articles. But, then, how about 3 issues of the NOAUG News without a single ST submission?

We've made the long-awaited upgrade to a 1200 baud BBS. A very good move which one can only applaud as a necessary upgrade to the board. But then there's the ever-continuing argument about the operation of the board itself, its placement, the power (or lack thereof) of the appointed SysOps, and ongoing problems in keeping the board up for more than a week at a time.

Thanks to Roy D'Arcangelo we have an accurate membership list and are kept informed as never before about club assets and expenditures. But the club's coffers are not exactly over-flowing and operating funds for the year may be tight, even if the current fund-raising efforts go as well as last year.

The newsletter's new format has been favorably received by both the NOAUG membership and our national readership. It's done a lot to improve NOAUG's image with both Atari and other clubs. But it is a drain on club resources and doesn't generate any revenue to defray even a portion of its costs.

Three months under our belt. We've made some progress. We need the help of the general membership, however, to solve some of these problems. How about some new ideas for fund raising so that cost won't be the deciding factor when we make a decision about moving the BBS or how many copies of the newsletter to print? How about a volunteer to write some letters to solicit ads for the newsletter? How about one of you ST'ers stepping up to fill the hole left by Steve Matlock's return to school?

This COULD be a banner year for NOAUG, we're on the edge here of some great breakthroughs. Let's not stop short. Get involved!

Not getting enough computer in two nights a week? Tune in to computers with public TV shows like *The Computer Chronicles*, *New Literary: Computers*, and *Computerworks*--every Saturday starting at 4:30 on WLAE-TV, Ch. 32.



Random Access

By Karl D. Belson

New Orleans Atari Hobbyists (NATH)

random (ran' dum) adj. having an equal chance
of being chosen or of occurring

access (ak' ses) n. approach or means of approach

When you use these two words in connection with a data file you get a file whose records can be retrieved or written in any order. This means that to get to the tenth record of the file, it is not necessary to read the nine preceding records. This type of disk access is often required by database applications such as **Symfile+**, but also can be used to retrieve specific error messages from a file of error messages, or in many other applications as yet untried. On the Atari

POSITION command does to the cursor on the screen). The very next I/O operation against that file will be within the specified sector at the given offset. Notice that I said "against that file." Before every I/O operation in random access mode, DOS must first read the sector specified by the application, regardless of whether input or output was specified. This is done to insure that the operation will take place within the bounds of the specified file.

Relative byte addressing is more frequently seen in the world of IBM PC's. This is the technique Atari DOS 3.0 and **SpartaDOS** chose to use. In this method of random access processing, the application program need only supply DOS with the byte offset from the beginning of the file. DOS calculates the proper sector to access and positions the disk drive's head accordingly. As with absolute addressing, the next I/O will occur within that sector at the appropriate offset. Unlike the other method, however, it is not necessary to stay within the bounds of the existing file. With relative byte processing it is possible to write past the end of the file! DOS will simply fill unused bytes with ATASCII zeroes. For example, if a file is 10 bytes long and the application points the DOS at the thirty-first byte and writes a record, bytes 11 through 30 will be filled with ATASCII zeroes. Additionally, if the application tries to read a record past the end of the file, DOS will simply return ATASCII zeroes as the record.

Both methods of random access get the job

Sample File



If read sequentially, 99 bytes would have to be read to get to the 10th record (Carson J.) Using random access you would simply point to byte 100 (using SpartaDos), or to the sector & byte holding the C in Carson (using Dos 2.x).

When using absolute addressing, an index must be built keeping track of where each record is on the file. Using relative addressing can be much simpler if you use the formula below:

(Rec. # - 1) x Rec. Length + 1 = offset from start of file in bytes

```

(6 - 1) x 11 + 1 = 66
7 x 11 + 1 = 78
77 + 1 = 78 --- Rec #8 offset

```

Under Dos 2.x this file might start in sector 205. Thus, record 8 would begin in byte 78 of that record. In BASIC: POINT #1,295,78

**CAN WE HELP
YOU?**

Let us know if there are any other programming topics you would like to see us cover!

8-bit computers there are two techniques used to implement random access. The first method is known as "absolute" addressing, and the second is "relative byte" addressing.

Absolute addressing is the technique employed by Atari DOS 2.x and DOS 2.x compatibles (i.e., SmartDOS, DOS XL, etc.). The absolute address of the record to be accessed randomly must be supplied to DOS by the application before each operation. These addresses are actually the physical sector number and the byte offset within that sector at which the desired record resides. Once DOS has been supplied with the sector and byte, the disk drive's head is positioned to access the desired sector (not unlike what BASIC's

done, but what are some reasons for wanting to use one over the other? As a programmer, should you really care what method of random access your DQS is using? The answer is very definitely yes! Choosing the right type of DQS for a random access application could make or break a project. In this case, choosing a DQS is as important as choosing a programming language for the application.

Choosing DOS 2.x or a DOS 2.x compatible is a plus in any environment where an application must EASILY integrate with other applications. DOS 2.0 is still the standard. In order to gain the ability to use relative byte addressing, DOS 3.0 and **Scartados** had to

(Continued on next page)

change the format of the directory and data sectors (DOS 3.0 and SpartaDos aren't even compatible with each other).

If memory constraints are a real problem, choosing relative byte addressing is a must. With absolute addressing it is necessary to keep an index of record keys and their sector and byte locations. Without this index it is impossible to know where each record starts on the disk. With relative byte addressing it is not necessary to have an index. Calculating the starting byte is as easy as knowing the record length. Multiply the number of the record desired (less one) by the record length. You will be pointed at the first byte of that record. This may give you a number one smaller than what you might calculate by hand, that is because we are talking about an offset--counting begins with zero, not one. Incorporate this with a binary search of the file and there is no need for an index. Even if you should decide to keep an index, it would be 3 bytes smaller per record. It is not necessary to hold the sector and byte with the key. The key's position, relative to the other keys, is enough to tell you the offset byte for that record. Just run it through the previously mentioned formula.

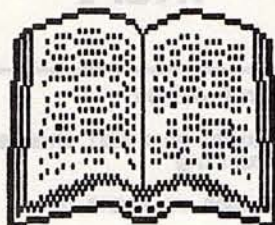
As far as ease of use--both methods can be implemented identically in standard Atari BASIC. Only the numbers that are used actually change. The commands that we use are NOTE and POINT. NOTE will return to the application the sector and byte (only the byte has any meaning in relative byte processing) that is about to be written or retrieved. POINT, on the other hand, will tell DOS where to write or retrieve the next record. Let's look at how these commands might be used in a program example:

```
10 REM *****
20 REM * SAMPLE PROGRAM USING *
30 REM * NOTE AND POINT TO EDIT *
40 REM * A DATA FILE. *
50 REM *****
60 DIM REC$(100)
70 OPEN #1,12,0,"D1:DATAFILE.DAT":
REM 12 indicates random access
80 TRAP 170
90 NOTE #1, SECTOR,BYTE
100 INPUT #1,RECS
110 FOR I=1 TO LEN(RECS)
120 IF REC$(I,I)=CHR$(128) THEN RECS
(I,I)=CHR$(ASC(REC$(I,I))-128)
130 NEXT I
140 POINT #1,SECTOR,BYTE
150 PRINT #1,RECS
160 GOTO 90
170 CLOSE #1
180 END
```

In the above example, the program will read in each record from DATAFILE.DAT, change any inverse characters to their normal counterpart, and re-write the record back to the file. This example will always work on a DOS 2.x disk, and will work on a SpartaDos disk provided there are no more than 324 records. Why the limit on the SpartaDos file? When using relative byte random access, only the byte portion of the NOTE and POINT commands has any meaning. The sector number will always be zero. The largest positive integer which can be represented using a cardinal (two-byte word) is 32767. This means that the value for the BYTE cannot exceed 32767. Each record is 101 bytes long (100 for data plus 1 for the carriage return character). Divide 32767 by 101; truncate to the nearest whole number, and you get 324.

There are other ways of performing relative byte random access from SpartaDos that will allow you to get around the 32767 byte limit (up to 8,000,000 characters!)...but that is for another article!

ST Book Review!



ST DISK DRIVES Inside & Out

Abacus Software Inc.

Reviewed by Dan Catterlin

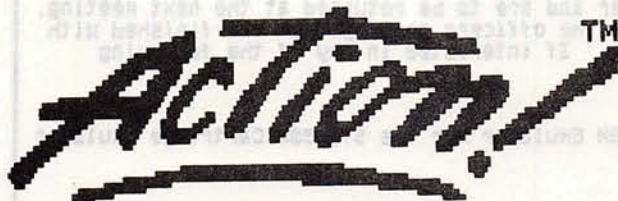
MURGE 7/87 (Reprint) - I think a better title for this book would be "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About ST Disk Drives", but I guess that is a little long isn't it? Well with over 400 pages, this book is long and packed to overflowing with stats and information about your ST disk drives. Some of the information was very useful, but other parts were a little too technical for me (I'm a computer user not an electronics specialist).

The book starts off at a beginners' level with a basic explanation of how data is stored on a disk, the structure of a disk with its tracks and sectors and towards the end becomes very technical revealing many secrets of the 3 1/2" floppy drive, the hard disk drive, and even RAM disks. You really get the grand tour of how the computer works with the drive to store and retrieve that data we all just take for granted. For the serious programmer there is all the software and hardware information to let you make the best use of your disk storage. Some of the topics covered in this book are File Structure and Organization, Access to Sequential and Random Access Data Files from Basic, Pascal, C, and Fortran, Basic Input and Output Systems (BIOS), Direct Memory Access (DMA), Disk Formats, and Disk Controllers. Information is also included about the cable connections and pin functions of all important hardware locations. Even information of how to hook up a 5 1/4" floppy drive to your ST. This may be valuable information when a good IBM-PC emulator hits the market.

There are even several useful program listings for those people ambitious enough to type them in, or you can buy the optional diskette with every program in the book already on it. These programs include a simple Data Base program, a RAM Disk program, a Disk Editor, and an extended Format program to name a few.

If you need an outstanding technical reference manual for the ST disk drives listing all the information you could ever use about disk drives, this is the book you have been waiting for. I would recommend this book for any serious programmer who wants to get the most out of his drives and with a price of only \$24.95 (as low as \$16 mail order) it's not that costly. But for the beginner there are other books better suited to your skill level.

A Piece of the



By Todd Petit

N.O.A.U.G. - If you recognize the logo above then you are undoubtedly familiar with the most powerful high-level language available for your 8-bit Atari. **Action!**, from those wizards at OSS, is a structured language that runs at almost assembly language speeds, incorporates many of the features found in popular languages like PASCAL and C, and, when coupled with its runtime package, produces true, stand-alone machine level code. The language is can be expanded upon by creating new commands in the form of PROCs or FUNCTIONS--and that will be the focus of this new monthly column. Each month I will present a new routine you can add to your **Action!** library that will give you even greater capabilities that those built-in to your cartridge library.

I suggest you set aside a disk as your **Action!** Library Disk. As you develop PROCs and FUNCTIONS or type in the ones presented here, save them onto this disk with either PROC or FNC extenders. That way all of your support routines will be in one place and can easily be INCLUDED into your programs.

This month I present a FUNCTION called **DOUBLEBYTE**. What **DOUBLEBYTE** does is take the **BYTE** you send it and double its image, returning a **CARD**. If that doesn't make sense, consider the following:

```
BYTE sent 129  image==> 10000001
CARD returned  image==> 1100000000000011
```

See what happened? We now have a value which, while not twice 129 mathematically, is twice 129 *visually*.

"What the bleep good is that?" you're probably asking. Well, lots if you are into graphics. For instance, it is quite simple to put **GR.0** style text onto a **GR.8** mode screen by poking the bytes that make up the character directly into screen memory. If you **DOUBLEBYTE** each byte and then **POKEC** it to the screen you will have characters that are twice as wide (or equivalent to **GR.1** characters). **PRINT SHOP** icons are easily transported over to **GR.8**--with **DOUBLEBYTE** you can easily expand the icons to double, or four times their normal size. (Don't forget, however, that in order to keep the image you are doubling in proportion you have to also double the number of scanlines in the image.)

The listing for **DBYTE.FNC** is provided below. Included is a mainline PROC to demonstrate just how it works. I hope you find some use for it in your graphic endeavors. Keep on compiling!

```
; BYTE DOUBLER PROC 1-20-87
; By Todd Petit for The NOAUG News
```

```
; Send a 100001, returns a
```

```
; 11000000000011
```

```
CARD FUNC DoubleByte(BYTE Sbyte)
BYTE Dbyte1,Dbyte2,Hbyte
CARD Dbyte
```

```
Hbyte=0 Dbyte1=0 Dbyte2=0
Hbyte=Sbyte&$80
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte1=Dbyte1%$C0 FI
Hbyte=Sbyte&$40
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte1=Dbyte1%$30 FI
Hbyte=Sbyte&$20
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte1=Dbyte1%$0C FI
Hbyte=Sbyte&$10
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte1=Dbyte1%$03 FI
Hbyte=Sbyte&$08
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte2=Dbyte2%$C0 FI
Hbyte=Sbyte&$04
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte2=Dbyte2%$30 FI
Hbyte=Sbyte&$02
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte2=Dbyte2%$0C FI
Hbyte=Sbyte&$01
IF Hbyte#0 THEN Dbyte2=Dbyte2%$03 FI
```

```
Dbyte=256*Dbyte2+Dbyte1
RETURN(Dbyte)
```

```
-----
PROC Main()
CARD X,ScrTop=88 BYTE I
Graphics(8) Poke(710,12) Poke(709,0)
For I=1 to 129
DO
  X=DoubleByte(I)
  Poke(ScrTop+I*40,I)
  PokeC(ScrTop+I*40+2,X)
DO
DO Until Strig(0)=0 OD
```

A Point of Contention

By Jeffrey Summers

The Acorn Kernel 8/87 (Reprint) - I happened upon an interesting "undocumented feature" in **ATARI BASIC** (8-bit) the other day. I was debugging a program that had been typed in sometimes in **ATARI BASIC** and sometimes in **TURBO BASIC XL**. I listed the file out to disk, then re-entered the program to free up some memory (unused variables, the extra bytes my rev. B **BASIC** puts at the end of every **SAVE**). However, when the program was re-entered, several program lines were flagged as having syntax errors. These lines were working fine, doing their job in the program before, but now they were syntax errors. Inspection showed that each line contained a **POINT** statement.

It turns out that **ATARI BASIC** will not allow you to type an expression for the sector and byte values in a **POINT** statement; they must be "plain vanilla" variables. This is an example of what **ATARI BASIC** was not allowing: **10 POINT #1,X1*X2,Y**. The **X1*X2** is flagged as illegal syntax in this statement. Instead, **ATARI BASIC** wanted **10 X=X1*X2:POINT #1,X,Y**.

TURBO BASIC does not restrict you in this way. The first statement is entirely legal to **TB**. Now, here's where it gets interesting. If you type the line in with **TB** you get no error. If you then run the program using regular **ATARI BASIC**, it runs perfectly well--no error is generated and the program works as expected. **AB** will execute the statement properly even if it can't be entered

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NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

By D. Holzouser

Newsletters may be checked by any club member and are to be returned at the next meeting. Newsletters are made available to members after the officers needing them are finished with them. This time period is no more than 30 days. If interested in any of the following newsletters, please see me.

SPACE 7/87

Computer Husband In Commentary; Pascal Tips; IBM Emulator For The ST; 800 Cartridge Emulator For The ST (Jonesware)

SPACE 6/87

Porting 8 To 16; Fractal Factory A Review--ST; From The Engineering Bridge--Atari Pirates Are Not Alone; Print Shop vs Print Master--comparison; CAD-3D Ver. 1.0 Review; Library Notes; 8-Bit Monitor Pinout

LACC 7/87

Cold Start For The 8-Bit; Dragon's Lair(ST)--review; Atari Pulls ST From Market--might be the title of an article one day; Threat To The ST; Atari Problems; Genlock For The ST???

Huntsville

Turbo-Basic: The First Report (has a program for changing variable names); ZMag 6/15; ZMag 6/22; Diskcache For The ST -review; Atari Press Release--6/1/87; Routines You Can Use; Online Today 1987 CIS--Compuserve

Eugene ACE June/July '87

News and Reviews; The Revolution Has Begun--Desktop Publishing; Bumpas Reviews--Colonial Conquest (ST), Rebel Charge At Chickamauga; A New If/Then Statement; DTP Help--Desktop Publishing; ST Recovery Procedure; A Tablet Top Adventure--game review; Train Crazy--type in; BlockBreaker--type in; Library Notes; STWriter Mail Merge; Seattle Atari Fair; 48K Limit; Phaser--review ST; Max

SAIL 6/87

The Basic Facts; Strategic Command Post; 1030 Express

LACC 6/87

Amiga vs ST; Aegis Animator--review ST; CEBIT '87--fair at Hanover; Ram Disk For 800XL

MACUG 6/87

Three Graphics Program; Firm Your Floppy; Atari News--reprint MAG; Ergonomically Speaking--reprint

GRASP 7/87

Laws of Computing; From Genie 6/16/87; ST Star Trek Preview; Antic's CES 6/87 wrap-up Second Annual Atari Roast; Music Sequencer; Chill, Then Serve W/ Silicon Chips; Graphic Artist 1.52

SPACE 7/87

Advanced Music Processor; Hot News; Upload/ Download; Using Atari's for Home Projects; Tech Tips; P.S. Funnies

ST Product Review:

FAST Desk Accessories

By Jim Woodward

The Pokey Press 4/87 (Reprint) - FAST is a collection of Desk Accessories, those goodies that Ken White (*Pokey Press* editor, Ed.) loves collecting. The difference between the average accessory and FAST is that there are seven different accessories in the space of one.

The Accessories are ST-Dos, ST Editor, Card File, Calendar, Clock, Calculator and ASCII Table. They all are your standard accessories, although, I, for one, still see no need for an ASCII table; who knows, one day I will probably want to kill for one.

The major feature of FAST is ST-Dos, a very nice thing to have on your word processing, accounting, file management or any other important disk that you use. It has nine commands and does each without any problems. Those with any experience with an MS-Dos

machine will love the "A:" prompt.

The commands are Date, Time (which automatically changes the built in clock and calendar), Directory and Type (gives you a disk directory, lets you sort them by filetype and will display a file), Rename, Copy, Erase (all very easy to understand) and Help. Help gives you a list of commands available.

The Editor is a full featured text editor, a great tool for saving yourself a note while doing the family finances on the spreadsheet. It even has macros, another nice feature. Card File is an address book, with the feature to autodial a phone number. The other accessories are ones that most ST owners have or have seen. The program is very much like "Cornerman" from Michtron, and as easy to use. The packaging, quick reference card and documentation make this a nice package to have.

The NORUG BBS is now 300/1200

(504) 738-3600

baud, operating
24 hours a day,
7 days a week.
Call on us!



"Why Don't Women Like Computers?"

A Woman's View

By Denise Holzhauer

N.O.R.U.G. - A few weeks ago while going thru newsletters, I came across an article entitled "Why Don't Women Like Computers?". This article is published in *Current Notes* and is interestingly amusing. With this question the author, Dave Small, raised a rather heated question as well as some possible answers. His wife, Sandy is quoted as having said: "The question is not why women aren't interested in computers but why men are interested in them to the degree they are."

I can not understand where he's coming from as I know alot of women who like computers and some of them are members of NORUG. As a matter of fact one of our meetings is held at St. Mary Magdalen School where there is a computer class taught by a woman on Ataris. My two boys go to school where their computer lab teacher is a woman. Being an officer of a user group that has female members, his attitude is baffling to me.

While I will agree that not as many women attend users group meetings as men, I do not agree that women do not like computers. There are other possible explanations as to the number of women at meetings. For instance, if a woman is married and has children she is probably home with them. Unless a babysitter is found she probably won't come. Nowadays in many families both husband and wife work, which leaves less time for taking care of chores, errands, and spending time with their children. Another possibility is that with the health consciousness of today's society, they chose to spend their time at a jazzercise class or maybe a spa. But, of the women I have seen at NORUG, I don't remember any wives with a "patiently suffering expression" as Dave Small has. Maybe all the women I know are exceptions--myself included. I don't know.

Perhaps the reason women do not seem interested in computers is that they cannot get to them. When my husband and I only had one computer in our family it was difficult for me to use it. The reason for this was that whenever I had free time to use the computer he was on it. Some men seem to get caught up into what they are doing on the computer and they lose track of time. This means if this male is married his wife goes to sleep without him, and he loses out on family time if he has children. Of course this doesn't happen in our family, but I know of some where it does. My husband and I solved the problem of me not having a chance to use the computer by getting a second computer for me. Although now that my children are older we have still another problem as they want to use it too! So, now I'll probably buy another computer for myself or my husband and give them one of ours. This problem is in many families and is not just in mine. So, Mr.

Small, maybe if you gave your wife some time to use the computer she might like it more.

There are many women as well as men who have never used a computer before so they don't like it for that reason. Someone in this situation would need to be shown what you can do with a computer. They should be shown how to do their bills on it, how to balance a checkbook, or how they can design cards or make signs and banners. Better still show them some of the fun games on the computer. People who have not used a computer much, or at all, need to be handled with care as they could become overloaded with information. When showing things be careful not to talk down to them (while not boring them or losing them). Computers are fun and most people that I have shown them to have become users.

Women may be a minority at meetings but that in no way implies that women do not like computers. There are many users groups in which women are active in and/or officers in. I know that in NORUG when I joined there were some women members, and more have joined since I did. A person's sex has nothing to do with whether they like computers are not. It is a matter of an individual's likes and dislikes.

When I graduated from high school I did data processing on an IBM. My husband and I both decided at about the same time to purchase a computer although our reasons for wanting one were different. Perhaps this is the reason why I enjoy my Atari computer so much. But then again maybe I'm an exception to the rule.

ARCTIC FOX

New for the ST from EA

By Jim Woodard

The Pokey Press 4/87 (Reprint) - Electronic Arts is living up to their promise to release the programs that are out for the Amiga for the ST. I haven't been too impressed with what I have seen yet. Skyfox could have been much better. The best part was the opening screen, but with Arctic Fox...a winner from the start. Now, if the price was \$10.00 lower....

You have been chosen to pilot a super fast, super powerful tank in the frozen wastelands of the Arctic to try to drive out the alien creatures that have built a base camp. Their aim: to create a new home world, complete with an atmosphere that they can breathe. And since ammonia, methane, and chlorine would do more than start a few asthma attacks, you had better be good.

The Slye-Hicks, MX-100 isn't just your average tank, no sir. But then, how many tanks have the ability to do 0 to 100 in seconds (love that turbo), 150MM cannons, mine dispensers, missile launchers, and two forty ton hydraulic lifts for suspension? And the bad guys aren't here for a Sunday picnic and snowball fight. There are lots of different types of craft they brought with them. You have to worry about heavy and light tanks, recon sleds, fighter aircraft, rocket launchers, radar stations, and floating mines (all to protect the air converters that are trying to make a mess of the atmosphere), communications forts that the enemy uses to keep track of your movements, and the main fort. Destroy that and we may get to keep control of the planet! If not....



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MIO and more from ICD

Continued From Page 1

drive interface unit. By the way, despite what you may have read elsewhere, you CAN use ANY DOS with the MIO, SpartaDOS by ICD is NOT required. It just works best with it.

ICD is also launching a new line of hard drives for the 8-bit AND the ST, their first venture into the 16-bit market. To be competitively priced at about \$650 for a 20 Meg, it should include an internal CLOCK and ports to control additional "bare" hard drives. There will be one unit for use with MIO (and also MACINTOSH!!), and another styled to sit slimly under the ST monitor with room inside for two hard drives. Additionally, ICD will shortly ship Fastback for the 8-bit ATARI, a very fast, menu driven backup system for any size hard drive. It will maximize floppy storage and can back up files that are bigger than a single floppy. It will also be able to make use of an "archive bit" which will be set by the new SpartaDOS-X DOS-on-a-cart, due out this summer. This will allow you to run Flashback and only files written or updated since the last backup will be copied, substantially reducing time and effort. Tom Marker also mentioned a new SpartaDOS Tools disk for the 8-bit line, including many hard drive and crash recovery utilities, plus lots of other items like reassignable console function keys, etc. This one might be out in time for the CES show in Chicago in June. Watch for a review!

Point

Continued From Page 5

in that language. Obviously inconsistent, but thankfully it isn't the other way--think of if the language allowed you to type in a statement that it didn't then know how to execute.

THIS SPACE FOR RENT?

IT COULD HAPPEN!

The NORUG News could really use your help in filling space in the newsletter. How about it? Write an article today!

SUPERMAN: The Game

By Javier I. Korneluk

The Pokey Press 6-7/87 (Reprint) - Over the years, First Star Software has made some great contributions to the 8-bit Atari world, including my all-time favorite game: **Boulder Dash**.

During the early '80s, First Star was known for their production of mediocre games. Their image (to say the least) in the computer software arena changed all of a sudden when **Boulder Dash** became a hit and a favorite of many. Now, they seem to be starting to lose some of that glamour with what seems to be a step back in time.

Introducing **Superman: The Game**, a hot, barely new idea for a game, right? We'll see!

It seems natural...a hit comic strip for decades, a character that has been portrayed in four movies, and an all-around good guy becomes a hit game. How could it miss?

As you first boot up the game, you are introduced to a fairly impressive title screen with what appears to be a city's skyline and Superman crisscrossing the screen waving at you. So far so good! Two high resolution pictures of the game's hero (Superman) and villain (Darkseid) follow the title screen. The two hi-res pictures are cheerfully accompanied by background music. (Superman gets a cheerful, heroic tune, while Darkseid gets a dark, evil score.)

Finally the game itself boots up and that is where the problems begin. The game itself is pointless and extremely boring. You get a bird's eye view of the city as you fly around the blocks trying to shoot Darkseid. In this part of the game, the graphics are simple and there is no background music. Whatever happened to that title screen glamour?

Personally, I've always hated programmers that write a lousy game and try to make it up by sticking an elaborate title screen in the beginning of the game. It always makes me wonder if the programmer is talented enough.

Programmer Fernando Herrera goofed! Herrera had been known for making some pretty decent games, so what happened?

As for First Star Software...Well guys, you can't win 'em all. (and your sales will probably show that!) Hopefully **Boulder Dash** will make up for this one.

All I can say about **Superman** is that it was a big disappointment.

Panic in Desktop Park

Confessions of a Desk Accessory Junkie

By Ken White

Atari ST User's News 3/87 (Reprint) - Okay, so six months ago, I didn't know nothin' about desk accessories. A desk accessory was like a paper clip, or maybe one of those magnetized things that hold the paperclips in cute little circles around the magnetic hole thing. Now THERE'S a desk accessory. I was a babe in the desk accessory woods.

Of course, I didn't have an ST six months ago. I was clean. My old 800 had a lot of "things", but it didn't have any desk accessories. Not a one.

Then circumstances changed and I developed a need for an ST professionally. Like a big sucker, I went in wondering about how I was gonna like using the mouse, or how the megabyte of memory I was getting would change my writing style, since the biggest text buffer I'd ever worked with was about 22K. Nobody bothered to mention the "side effects" of desk accessories, and I didn't know enough to ask.

I started off on the soft stuff. The control panel, the terminal emulator, and the printer installation accessory were my only neighbors under DESK (on the menu bar...). Yeah, so I didn't have a modem yet, or a printer. But I could sure change those colors. I never realized that there were color combinations that would make you think you were a reincarnation of Jayne Mansfield.

After a while, I started reading about Thunder! from Batteries Included, and all the reviews made mention of the fact that there was an "accessory" version that would check my typing WHILE I WROTE for spelling errors. Well jump back Jack! That sounded pretty good to me. I got it.

Then somebody started telling me something about Cornerman, how it had all these things available as an accessory, everything from a dialer and a notepad to an onscreen digital clock and a calculator. Just one click of the mouse and there you were.

Well, that sounded pretty good to me. All that stuff in an accessory. Didn't need my notepad next to the computer or that calculator that used to be in the drawer before it deserted me and went to Honduras to join the Contras. So I got Cornerman too.

For a couple of weeks, I was okay with my little package of desk accessories. I used them every day, and was completely satisfied. Then, I went on GENIE (General Electric's answer to CompuServe) and I happened to see that they had a whole download library devoted to "desk accessories". Obviously, I had to take a look...

When I'd finished scrolling through the fifty or so desk accessories available to me there, my hair must have looked like something Don King would be proud of. There were ALL KINDS OF DESK ACCESSORIES! Everything from RAMdisks to things that did things I didn't even understand. All free for the taking.

I started small. Downloaded a calendar (dumb little thing that brings up a calendar, month by month, from January 1980 right on through the next century...you got married on February 19, 1983? Hey, that was a Saturday...). a clock (yeah, so I had enough clocks on Cornerman to rival the little Hungarian clockmaker down the street...but this one can be...well, altered. Changed in form...Hello, Dali, if you know what I

mean...), a scientific calculator (I know, I had one of those with Cornerman too, but you never know when you might need JUST a calculator available on your disk, right?) and a stupid little 3-D maze game called Mimos.

Oh, boy, I was really cooking. I put calendars on my word processing and telecommunications disks and filed the rest of the accessories away on a new disk labeled appropriately enough, "Desk Accessories". The Monkey was beginning to climb up my back.

The next night, I was back on GENIE again, searching through the desk accessories download library for additional accessories that I might imagine, I found a couple.

How does a little accessory that tells you how much free RAM you have in your computer sound? Or is maybe a little item called Tiny Tools more to your liking--it's a combination disk sector and memory examiner and editor. Now personally I don't have a whole lot of use for something like this, and I'm not sure why I downloaded it (no, you can't have a banana) except it sounded interesting--I also felt there was a possibility that I might wake up one morning after a vision that explained the meaning of short non-words with dollar signs and other funny stuff in them.

And then there's the Word Window. The Word Window is a fairly full-featured word processor IN A DESK ACCESSORY. Yes, if you thought you needed to boot up your favorite word processor to write that letter to Mom (or to the credit card company), you thought wrong. Just swing your pointer up to the DESK menu item, click Word Window, and you've got a word processor that will give you the power to edit, move blocks of text, save files, print files, embed printer codes, and do just about anything you might want to do with a text file. It'll only deal with documents of approximately 32K (80 columns of text by 400 lines), but I wrote a BOOK with AtariWriter and a 22K text buffer...and Word Window has more features.

Read some more about the ST. Hmm, a RAM disk accessory might be real nice. Create a RAMdisk at bootup, so it's there and ready for me whenever I need it. And they come in sizes ranging from about 78k up to 709K. Okay, you don't have to stare at me disapprovingly--I downloaded a variety of sizes, for different occasions.

I was in full-scale accessory addiction by this point. I stopped looking for interesting new accessories and started thinking about what kind of accessories I WANTED. I hunted and dug around, looking for an accessory that would allow me to format disks and do basic DOS-type functions without exiting my application programs. After a week, I found Disk Manager. Format disks, delete files, create folders, all kinds of useful stuff. I grabbed it.

I've managed to calm down over the last few days--I spend my time moving accessories from disk to disk, then booting a disk up and seeing how I like it. It's not that my lust for accessories has cooled; rather, I have enough accessories to play with...for the time being.

I was on GENIE again tonight...didn't notice any new accessories...I sure hope somebody writes another good one real soon...or I'll have to give CompuServe a call and see what THEY'VE GOT...a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do....

(NOBAG members under a similar addiction should see the club's 16-bit librarian.-Ed.)

OCTOBER 1987

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6 NOAUG MEETS AT LIVAUDAIS VIDEO IN HARRAHAN AT 7 PM	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 NOAUG MEETS AT ST MARY SCHOOL IN METAIRIE AT 7 PM	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 HALLOWEEN

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Don't mention me in your articles.
Sincerely, the editor of the 1987 (October-87)

When I finished scrolling through the list of disk accessories available to me there, my heart must have looked like something out of a horror movie. There were ALL kinds of disk accessories! Everything from RAMdisk to things that did things I didn't even understand. All time for the taking.

I started scrolling through a calendar, came little thing that brings up a calendar, month by month, from January 1988 right on through the next century. You got nothing on February 19, 1993. Hey, that was a Saturday... a clock (yeah, so I had enough clocks on my screen to rival the little Hungarian clockmaker down the street... but this one can be well altered. Changed to York... Hello, Dell, if you know what I

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